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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 165

Nebraska, and it's been generating electricity for the customer, NPPD customer, since 1974. It's actually the largest single power plant in Nebraska, and a major employer in southeast Nebraska. You know, it employs 700 people, and they're good paying jobs, and they, obviously, are valuable to the economy of the state of Nebraska, with the kind of payout they have down there. The only purposes, as Senator Schrock indicated to you, of this bill, is to make sure, if they decide to hire a management company...and by the way, this management company that is looking at perhaps taking over the management manages six other nuclear plants around the country, and their ratings in those plants are all number one, I think one or so of them may be number two, while Cooper is down at the bottom of the list. And they have given, at least in my judgment, and I think many others', some certainty that they can bring the rating of that plant up to where there won't be this concern that's been going on. Now, they have indicated, if you read the article in the paper, there's no actual safety problem, it's just bad management. The cost of producing current down there at the present time is more than other power plants, and that goes back again, I suspect, to management. And it's the attitude of...the board of directors of the power of the district are...by the way, support this idea, because they think they can improve the management skills, because this company has lots of expertise in running nuclear power plants. And I suspect that's what we need down at Cooper in order to keep it providing electricity for the customers in this state. As Senator Schrock said, this bill is simply necessary because there's some uncertainty, certainly, with the management companies that are looking at taking over management, as to whether in fact they can do it or not. Now, it appears they probably could, but they want to make sure the law is clear and there's no uncertainty about indemnification for people who run this. There again, and Senator Schrock brought this out, NPPD is still responsible for anything that happens with this power plant. It's not going to be turned over to somebody outside of this state. But it is going to allow the plant to continue to operate and to become more efficient, and I guess that's what we're all about. I would hope that you would advance this bill, and give a chance for this power plant to be more efficiently operated and keep producing power for the citizens of Nebraska. So it's my pledge to you that this is the